

Message Text

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TAGS: EFIN, GW

SUBJECT: CHANGES IN THE GERMAN FEDERAL MINISTRY
OF FINANCE

1. SUMMARY. THE FEDERAL CABINET HAS NOW CONFIRMED
THE APPOINTMENT OF MANFRED LAHNSTEIN AS STATE
SECRETARY (UNDER SECRETARY) SUCCEEDING KARL OTTO POEHL
AT THE FINANCE MINISTRY. LAHNSTEIN WILL BE SUCCEDED
IN HIS PRESENT JOB OF ASSISTANC SECRETARY BY
DR. HORST SCHULMANN. END SUMMARY.

2. MANFRED LAHNSTEIN IS HIGHLY RESPECTED AMONG HIS
COLLEAGUES IN BONN AS A MAN WHO FOCUSES ON WHAT IS
IMPORTANT AND APPROACHES THIS IN A VERY DIRECT AND
PRAGMATIC MANNER. COMPARED TO HIS PREDECESSOR,
WASHINGTON OFFICIALS ARE LIKELY TO FIND LAHNSTEIN
MORE DIRECT AND LESS DIPLOMATIC, BUT EQUALLY EASY
TO WORK WITH. LAHNSTEIN IS THE PERSONAL CHOICE OF
FINANCE MINISTER APEL FOR HIS NEW JOB AND CAN BE
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EXPECTED TO HAVE HIS MINISTER'S CONFIDENCE, IF
ANYTHING, TO AN EVEN GREATER DEGREE THAN HIS
PREDECESSOR. HE DOES NOT HAVE STATE SECRETARY POEHL'S
DIRECT PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT
BUT IS MUCH MORE DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE SPD AND THE
TRADE UNIONS THAN POEHL.

3. LAHNSTEIN MOVES TO HIS NEW JOB FROM THAT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF FINANCE FOR "BASIC QUESTIONS OF FISCAL POLICY" WHICH COMBINED A GENERAL POLICY PLANNING FUNCTION WITH THAT OF BRINGING OVERALL ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS TO BEAR ON FISCAL DECISIONS AND REPRESENTING THE MINISTRY IN INTERDEPARTMENTAL ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS CYCLE POLICY FORMULATION GROUPS. IN THIS JOB LAHNSTEIN HAS HAD A MAJOR INPUT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS CYCLE POLICIES. HE HAS SHOWN HIMSELF TO BE AN ABLE ECONOMIST WHO IS ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE AS A BUREAUCRAT AND SKILLFULLY BLENDS PARTY POLITICS WITH PUSHING FOR WHAT MAKES SENSE ECONOMICALLY.

4. PRIOR TO COMING TO THE FINANCE MINISTRY IN MAY OF 1974, LAHNSTEIN WORKED FOR CHANCELLOR BRANDT AS HEAD OF THE CHANCELLERY ECONOMIC DIVISION (IN THAT JOB, TOO, POEHL WAS HIS PREDECESSOR). PRIOR TO THAT HE SPENT SIX YEARS WITH THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY IN BRUSSELS ENDING UP AS CHEF DE CABINET OF EC VICE PRESIDENT WILHELM HAFERKAMP.

5. LAHNSTEIN IS 39 YEARS OLD, IS MARRIED, HAS TWO SONS FROM A PREVIOUS MARRIAGE. HIS WIFE WORKS FOR THE EC LIAISON OFFICE IN BONN. HE SPEAKS EXCELLENT ENGLISH AND FRENCH AND SOME ITALIAN (HE HAS A VACATION HOME IN ITALY). HIS WIFE SPEAKS EXCELLENT FRENCH AND ADEQUATE ENGLISH. BOTH LAHNSTEIN'S ARE INTERESTED IN ART AND GARDENING.

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6. LAHNSTEIN VISITED THE UNITED STATES IN 1972 UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL VISITORS PROGRAM. IN MANY YEARS OF CLOSE PERSONAL CONTACT, EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE ALWAYS FOUND LAHNSTEIN HELPFUL AND WELL DISPOSED TOWARD THE US. THE FAMILY IS PLANNING A PRIVATE VACATION TRIP TO CANADA AND THE US THIS SUMMER.

7. HORST SCHULMANN COMES TO HIS NEW JOB FROM THE STAFF OF THE EC COMMISSION. PRIOR TO GOING TO BRUSSELS, HE WAS FROM 1967-69 SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE GERMAN COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC EXPERTS. HE IS 44 YEARS OLD.
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